

Ignatov, which should include such initiatives as establishing Orthodox and Islam as state religions and imposing a departure tax on persons of childbearing age and "trained specialists."

Mr. Speaker, what can we say? Do Mr. Putin and others in the Russian Government take seriously the advice of people who prattle on about "Hasidic-paramasonic" groups usurping power in a so-called "world government"? The Ignatov article is, at best, a vacuous ramble about the "New World Order and world government, and, at worst, a vicious piece of anti-Semitism reflecting the mind set of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. To wrap fish in it would be to insult fish.

For the record, the Russian Orthodox Church, for all its claims as the historic Christian faith in Russia, has rejected the idea of becoming the state church. Even the Soviet government backed down from the departure tax idea back in the early 1980s.

In my opinion, this article is unworthy of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, a widely read newspaper of a generally "centrist" orientation. I don't deny their right to print whatever they want, but I find it hard to believe that the editors of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* want their publication to resemble some of the many anti-Semitic rags that have emerged in post-Soviet Russia.

In any event, I would certainly hope that the leadership of the Russian Government disavows the article, the author and certainly the policy prescriptions suggested.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2000

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, due to weather delays, I was unable to participate in the following vote. If I had been present, I would have voted as follows:

September 25, 2000, rollcall vote 478, on recognizing the 25th anniversary of the enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, I would have voted "yea."

SERBIA DEMOCRATIZATION ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. MARSHALL "MARK" SANFORD

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 25, 2000

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support of H.R. 1064, The Serbia Montenegro Democracy Act of 1999. In April of last year, I offered a bill containing many of the same provisions of Mr. Smith's bill with the belief that we needed to come up with some alternative strategy, in dealing with Milosevic and the situation in the Balkans.

In wake of the alleged fraud during yesterday's election, I believe it is as important now as it was last April that we begin focusing on what we are doing in the former Yugoslavia. What this bill attempts to do is look towards the future of the region, and I believe begs a

larger point of what are we doing in that part of the world.

For starters, look at the cost of our military operations in Kosovo, such as Noble Anvil, Joint Guardian, Balkan Call, Eagle Eye, Sustained Hope, Task Force Hawk thus far these programs have totaled over \$5 billion. Then add in the cost in Bosnia, roughly \$8.95 billion. Lastly, add in other missions in the Balkans and the total amount of United States taxpayers money spent in the region since 1991 comes to \$15.7 billion. I have to ask the question, where does it end?

We still have troops in Bosnia and Kosovo, despite promises to bring them home. If we have not begun to find some kind of alternative to our current strategy in Montenegro, history will repeat itself. The U.S. has already made commitment after commitment in the Balkans and a break away Montenegro would probably be no different.

So I would applaud Mr. Smith's leadership for incorporating my bill into today's legislation. I would hope that this and future administrations come up with some kind of strategy other than sending troops and bombs through the sky with the Balkans, because that seems to be our current strategy. I think that this bill is a more effective and efficient alternative.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2000

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this Chamber on Monday, July 25, 2000 when rollcall vote No. 487 was cast and on Tuesday, July 26, 2000 when rollcall vote No. 493 was cast. Had I been present in this Chamber at the time these votes were cast, I would have voted "yes" on each of them.

IN HONOR OF ADAM VENESKI, PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S FIREHOUSE OF WILLIAMSBURG, BROOKLYN

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2000

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague NYDIA VELAZQUEZ, to pay special tribute to Adam Veneski, the President of The People's Firehouse and a pillar of the Northern Brooklyn community, who recently passed away.

Mr. Veneski, who in early 1975 was a well-liked neighborhood grocer in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, suddenly became a passionate political activist after his neighborhood firehouse, Engine 212, was closed as a result of the Mayor Abe Beame's financial cutbacks. Disillusioned by the excessive number of firehouse closings and concerned for the safety of his neighbors, Mr. Veneski organized a campaign against the city government aimed at changing the Mayor's mind. Mr. Veneski, using every resource he had, however limited, strove towards achieving a single, meaningful goal—to save Engine 212.

Conceiving one of New York City's most memorable acts of civil disobedience, Mr. Veneski encouraged neighbors to sleep in the firehouse on round-the-clock shifts for nearly eighteen months while holding the fire truck hostage as a direct message to the city to keep North Brooklyn's firehouse open. When the Mayor ordered his opposition removed, a deputy fire chief said, "We're not going to remove them, it's the people's firehouse." The name has stuck around since—and so has Adam Veneski.

Mr. Veneski's goal was not only achieved through his public protests, but it was also realized as a result of his relentless research into facts that exhibited the necessity of preserving Engine 212. Mr. Veneski became an expert on fire-related injuries in his neighborhood, pointing out that eight fire-related deaths had occurred during the eighteen months Engine 212 was closed. As a result of the valiant efforts of Mr. Veneski and his neighbors, Engine 212, now known as the People's Firehouse, was reopened and the alarming increase in fire deaths in Williamsburg strongly reduced.

Mr. Veneski, fresh from his triumphal success as a community activist and invigorated by his role in helping the community, continued to serve his North Brooklyn neighborhood. After Engine 212 was reopened as a fully operational fire station, Mr. Veneski and his united neighbors formed a community assistance program, the People's Firehouse, Inc. (PFI). PFI provides legal outreach and mediation services, language education specialists, and housing development assistance to the residents of North Brooklyn. The People's Firehouse is celebrating its twenty-fifth year of public service this year and owes its success to a kind and personable grocer from Williamsburg Brooklyn—Adam Veneski.

From simple beginnings and with few resources, Mr. Veneski pioneered a movement that not only assisted in the improvement of the lives of those in his community, but through the preservation of the People's Firehouse and his dogged determination, saved many of those lives as well. North Brooklyn lost a tenacious advocate with the death of Adam Veneski. He will be sorely missed.

HONORING GEORGE H. WELDON, SR.

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2000

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate a long-time constituent of the 15th Congressional District of New York and certainly a very dear friend, George H. Weldon, Sr.

On September 28, 2000, George Weldon will receive the Tenth Annual Samuel DeWitt Proctor Phoenix Award from the Abyssinian Development Corporation which is a comprehensive community development and human services organization serving the Harlem community.

George Weldon is one of Harlem's leading businessmen. He has operated the George H. Weldon Funeral Home, Inc., a well-respected family owned funeral business located in Harlem, for over forty years.